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Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.
Essex County Executive

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 10, 2020

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**ESSEX COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIVINCENZO ANNOUNCES
GRANT PROGRAM TO HELP PAY RENT FOR ESSEX COUNTY SMALL BUSINESSES
AND NON-PROFIT AGENCIES IMPACTED BY CORONAVIRUS**
*To apply, visit the [Essex County Office of Small Business Development](http://www.ecsmallbiz.org)
at www.ecsmallbiz.org*

Essex County, NJ – Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. announced that Essex County is allocating \$9 million to create the Essex County Small Business Lease Emergency Assistance Grant. This grant funding is designed to help small businesses and non-profit agencies in Essex County that have been negatively impacted by the Coronavirus pay their rent. Essex County businesses and non-profit agencies would be able to apply for as much as a \$30,000 grant. Essex County is partnering with the NJ Redevelopment Authority to administer the program. Applications will be available beginning Monday, November 16th at the Essex County Office of Small Business Development website at www.ecsmallbiz.org. Grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

A webinar to explain the application process will be presented Friday, November 13th at 10 a.m. Registration for the webinar is required. To register, visit bit.ly/EssexCounty_Grants.

“Small businesses form the backbone of our local economy and non-profit organizations provide a vital safety net of social services for our residents. Both have been heavily impacted by the Coronavirus and both need our help to be able to economically survive,” DiVincenzo said. “Through our partnership with the NJRA, we are making grants available to help small businesses and non-profits pay for their rent. This will help small businesses and non-profits keep their doors open and benefits landlords who will receive rental payments so they can pay for property taxes and other expenses,” DiVincenzo said.

“Small businesses in Essex County have certainly been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. As leaders in government, we must do our part to help them through these unprecedented times. This program will help businesses keep their doors open, it will allow landlords to continue to pay property taxes on the buildings where they are based, and it will allow area residents to continue patronizing businesses that are part of the fabric of their communities,” Freeholder President Brendan Gill said. “I thank our County Executive,

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and our county leadership as a whole, for this program and the relief it will provide,” he added.

“I applaud our county leadership, led by County Executive Joe DiVincenzo, for implementing this measure to provide financial assistance to small businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19. Small businesses are extremely vital to our community,” Freeholder Vice President Wayne Richardson said. “Earlier this month, we began taking applications for the Essex County Coronavirus Emergency Rental Assistance Program to help our residents stay in their homes and avoid eviction. The creation of the Small Business Lease Emergency Grant program, which will help small businesses remain open and vibrant, shows our commitment to continue assisting the residents and businesses of our community through the pandemic.”

Essex County is funding the Small Business Lease Emergency Assistance Grant with money it received from the Federal CARES Act. Essex is partnering with the NJ Redevelopment Authority to have the state agency accept and review the applications.

Grants are available to Essex County based small businesses and non-profit agencies. Applicants must be:

- Tenants leasing commercial space in mixed-used buildings.
- Tenants leasing commercial space in commercial buildings.
- Store front businesses that lease their space.
- To be eligible, the applicant’s leased premises must be no more than 7,500 square feet of leasable space. Priority will be given to leased premises of 5,000 square feet or less.
- Applicants do not have to be delinquent on their lease payments; As a small business owner, the applicant may have exhausted all of their savings to avoid closing their business.
- Not eligible to apply are businesses that are engaged in gambling or “adult” activities, auction sales, Christmas tree sales, tattoo parlors, smoke shops and liquor stores.

Eligible applicants will need to provide:

- A current copy of their lease.
- Certification from the tenant confirming a closing date due to the pandemic.
- A copy of a current NJ tax clearance certificate.
- Answers to debarment questions included in the application.
- Verification from the landlord that the business is in good standing with monthly lease obligations prior to March 1, 2020.

The willing participation of the landlord is necessary for the application and the landlord must verify he or she will accept payment from Essex County. Residents and landlords also must affirm that funding assistance has not been received from other sources that would create a duplication of benefits. When an application is approved, the payment will be made directly to the landlord.

This is the second program Essex County is creating to assist small businesses and non-profit agencies. In June, Essex partnered with the NJ Economic Development Authority to offer the Essex County Small Business and Non-Profit COVID Relief Fund.

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